

HANDBOOK: THE PRACTICE OF PEER MEDIATION  
USING CONFLICT MANAGEMENT SKILLS  
AT THE MIDDLE SCHOOL LEVEL (GRADES 5/6)

MASTER'S PROJECT

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by

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## DEDICATION

This handbook study is dedicated to my family, for without their support this project and completing my master's would not have been possible.

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## CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

Stories of youth aggressiveness and violence dominated the news, and schools were faced with the problem of dealing with violent incidents, as well as interpersonal conflicts every day. An enormous amount of administrative and teacher time was spent on disciplinary matters. Thus, a great many schools began teaching social skills and conflict management. Shepherd (1994) stated that the National Association for Mediators in Education reported a 40% increase since 1991 in school programs that taught conflict resolution. Cutrona and Guerin (1994) discussed the merits of such programs. These included students learning basic skills in communication, listening and problem solving. There was less conflict in the classroom; thus, less teacher and administrator time was devoted to discipline. The overall school morale improved. The teaching of conflict resolution skills empowered students to solve their own problems and regulate their own behavior. Thus, many schools have abandoned traditional discipline procedures and have engaged in alternative conflict management programs such as peer mediation.

In order to address the middle school's individual conflict-resolution needs, questions were asked concerning the types of conflict, where the conflict occurred, the discipline policy and how well that policy worked before the implementation of a peer mediation program. According to Cutrona and Guerin (1994) an appropriate model must be selected based on a variety of aspects which included the following: violence prevention, bias awareness, conflict-resolution cultural diversity and peer mediation. The Ohio Commission on Dispute Resolution and Conflict Management (OCDRCM) reported on three approaches to conflict management in schools. These approaches included the mediation approach, the classroom approach and the comprehensive approach. In summary, Cutrona and Guerin (1994) stated that each school's unique dynamics affected the conflict-resolution program, structure, policies, and implementation costs.

Peer mediation merits included maintaining a school environment that was calm, comfortable, and conducive to learning as well as students who benefited because they learned effective and appropriate ways to deal with anger.

Having students who are trained as conflict managers provided more



people in a school who can listen and help. A greater sense of school ownership was felt by those who were mediating as well as the whole student body (Hereford, 1993). The OCDRCM (1993) identified the following benefits in its final report:

1. Disciplinary actions decreased
2. Suspensions cut in half
3. Student attitude affected
4. School climate improves
5. Teachers and counselors benefit
6. Student mediators gain self confidence
7. Home behavior improves

Interpersonal skills and problem solving methods were developed and prepared the students for their future role in their school, home and community.

"Teaching kids conflict management skills is key. We train students to work with peers to help them deal more successfully with stress" (Hereford, 1993, p. 32) Drew (1987) discussed a need for a program that would teach the skills of peacemaking in the same way math, reading and spelling were taught; thus demonstrating peacemaking as logical, practical and invaluable. Johnson and Johnson (1987)

concluded that the skills of interacting effectively and peacefully with each other and the world at large was perhaps the most important thing for students to learn. As summarized by Lane and McWhirter (1992) those skills directly taught, modeled and reinforced in the process of peer mediation, helped children mature into adults who know how to solve problems while respecting the views of others. The teaching of conflict-resolution skills definitely included benefits that extended beyond the classroom and the playground.

Since conflicts were inevitable when people interacted with one another, peer mediation reduced destructive behavior among students and helped eradicate conflict in our schools. Educators had equipped students with the tools necessary to successfully manage conflict such as communication skills, problem solving, critical thinking and negotiating techniques.

The importance of developing alternative conflict resolution models was essential. Learning to manage conflict peacefully as an opportunity for growth and change was a life skill both teachers and students needed to develop in themselves and others.

## STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The purpose of this project was designed to study and define the merits of peer mediation with fifth and sixth grade students. The study included the examination of student and staff benefits from the use of peer mediation as opposed to other discipline alternatives. It also included the development of a design for a peer mediation program at the middle school. It examined the selection and training of student mediators as well as the role of the staff. In addition, the purpose of the project was to develop materials and procedures for selection, training and assessment of the peer mediation program.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Because of young people's inability to make wise decisions we have witnessed a phenomenal rise in the incidents of juvenile crime and delinquency, teenage pregnancies, youth unemployment, school dropouts, and suicide. The gap between traditional, ethical values and the acts of the young have widened (Masialas, 1990) This gap exhibited itself as violence in the schools which began with angry students in conflict with one another or with adults in the school. It threatened not only property but also young people and their education. Teaching the students lifelong skills of conflict resolution was a basic step to ending this violence in our schools. Students needed to be taught the skills to make wise decisions to appropriately and effectively solve many problems they encountered. In the 1991 Carnegie Council on adolescent development, peer mediation was identified as the fastest growing type of conflict resolution program being implemented in the schools to meet this need (Shepherd, 1994).

To research the merits of peer mediation as an alternative method of disciplining, three areas of literature were reviewed. The three areas

included the following:

1. The background and development of peer mediation.
2. The merits of peer mediation.
3. The teaching of conflict resolution skills through peer mediation programs.

### The Background and Development of Peer Mediation

To investigate the background and development of peer mediation as a method of conflict resolution, several issues were considered and researched. One aspect of the study involved an examination of the nature of conflict and the types of conflicts most frequently experienced in schools. The need for an alternative program to deal with conflict was also studied and discussed. An exploration of existing discipline policies and programs was included in the project. Suggestions for effective procedures needed to set up the peer mediation program were researched. All of these issues were considered in designing a program to meet the specific needs of the middle school.

Conflict was natural and an everyday part of life. Violence has been hypothesized to exist, at least in part, because the media, especially television, repeatedly showed situations in which force and power were

necessary to resolve conflict. Schools also promoted conflict, as they pitted one child against another in areas such as attendance, grades, teachers' attention, and status. In an environment such as this it was shown that one person must lose so that another person could win (OREA, 1992). Conflict may be as simple as a misunderstanding of friends or as complex as violence in the home.

Araki and Takeshita (1991) cited research from a cooperative project between the University of Hawaii and the Hawaii State Department of Education. This project, The Dispute Management Project (DMSP), involved high school, intermediate, and elementary students. In this study the nature and types of student conflicts most frequently experienced were categorized into eight types. These types included gossip and rumor, arguments, dirty looks, classroom behavior, harassment, jealousy, fights or pending fights, and invasion of privacy. The types of conflicts were further analyzed to the highest percentages of conflict occurrences in the DMSP. This analysis showed 27.2% of the occurrences involved gossip and rumor, 27.2% were incidents of harassment, 19.7% were arguments and 9.1% of the conflicts were inappropriate classroom behavior. More specific to the purpose of this project 40.6% of the occurrences of conflict at the intermediate school level were a result of

gossip and rumor. Gender differences in the highest percentages of conflict types were observed. Girls were most often involved in conflicts of gossip and rumor (23%) and arguments (15.4%). Incidents of harassment (13.6%) were most common among boys.

Conflicts can and should be handled as they arise before they build into something more violent. The skills to effectively resolve conflicts were lacking or missing in many children and adults. Conflict created a good learning experience, if handled effectively. If conflict was handled ineffectively, it quickly escalated to physical and emotional violence. A middle school stated in the OCDRCM (1993) report that if children do not learn to manage conflict, which is inevitable, they will not be able to attend to the important things in their lives. School-based conflict resolution and mediation training were appropriate mechanisms to help bring this about. Effective ways of handling conflicts were learned by young people and adults. Most conflict resolution training programs attempted to instill the attitudes, values, knowledge and skills which led to effective, cooperative problem solving (Stuart, 1991). When people learn lifetime problem solving concepts and skills, behavior in conflict situations improved. If they learned and practiced the skills in real life situations, they were able to witness peers and those authority figures

that modeled the new skills.

The 1993 OCDRCM report described schools as a mini representation of society. The behavior and attitudes of family members, community leaders and national figures followed the students and teachers into the building. Sadly, many adults did not model conflict behavior for children. All these problems that schools were faced with were complex and overwhelming and required many different approaches.

Traditional disciplining approaches such as expulsion, time-out rooms, suspensions and reprimanding required an adult to monitor student behavior, determine whether it was or was not in the bound of acceptability and force students to terminate inappropriate actions. These traditional approaches taught students that these adults or authority figures were needed to resolve conflicts. The approaches cost instructional and administrative time and worked only as long as students were under surveillance. These approaches did not empower students. Students did not learn the procedures, skills and attitudes required to solve conflicts constructively. Students needed to be trained to manage conflict and empowered to solve their own problems so teachers could concentrate on instruction and not control (Johnson, Johnson, Dudley, and Burnett, 1991).



Peer mediation, as an alternative approach, addressed these needs by enlisting people surrounding students on a daily basis such as parents, other students and teachers. It was aimed at the needs of middle school students who were caught in the struggle between peer group pressure and developing their own identities (OREA, 1992).

In order to implement peer mediation as an alternative approach, various procedures and instructions were recommended by researchers and schools already involved in peer mediation. Suzanne Miller, an assistant principal, organized a peer mediation program in her school and advised several important steps for set up. First, the concept of peer mediation needed to be publicized so that interested teachers and students could get involved. Another important step was for the school to form an advisory council to decide on policies and make decisions. Included on this council were teachers, students, administrators, counselors, and parents. Next, a professional mediator was arranged for training of teachers and staff. Miller recommended approximately 20 hours of training. Following training of students and staff, advertisements were made for student trainees. After student applicants were interviewed through a selection process, the trainees were chosen. Miller suggested approximately 21 trained mediators for 1,000 students. This group was representative of

the total school population. Training of student mediators was the next recommended step. This training involved 17-20 hours, including role-play situations. Mediators were awarded with T-shirts or arm bands which identified them as mediators following the training. These mediators were included on a duty roster with two or more mediators on duty every day. Forms were developed and distributed so that mediation could be requested and recommended. The program was publicized to students and parents in various ways which included announcements over the public-address system, assemblies, and newsletters. Miller maintained that there were important steps necessary to keep the program going. Mediators needed to be recognized through awards and announcements. Monthly meetings were necessary to discuss problems. Frequent reports to staff and parents were critical to maintain support. New mediators needed to be trained yearly. All these efforts helped keep a peer mediation program going strong (Miller, 1993).

In a democracy, citizens are expected to be responsible for their own behavior. All Americans must learn how to exemplify that freedom. Many of us discussed this around the dinner table in the evening. Because the majority of families today no longer eat together for that evening meal, the schools have inherited another role. Students must be

empowered to become responsible for their actions and taught the problem solving skills needed to live in an ever more diverse society. In too many schools, the word discipline became synonymous with punishment.

Discipline came from the work disciple, meaning "to teach". Conflict management and Peer Mediation programs better addressed discipline problems by teaching the students necessary skills to effectively deal with conflicts in their lives (Evans and Eversole, 1992).

#### The Merits of Peer Mediation

Conflict management programs were created to provide young people and adults with better skills in communication, problem solving, critical thinking, de-escalating conflict situations, and achieving "win-win" agreements. The merits of teaching these skills included safer school environments, prevention of violence, improved classroom management, a decrease in administrative intervention, increased citizen participation, better prepared young people entering the work force, and better parenting skills. These skills also aided young people in making better choices when confronted with peer pressure, violence, disagreements, alcohol and other drugs (OCDRCM. 1993). Students became actual participants in enhancing a friendly and safe school environments after participation in a peer mediation program. Merits of peer mediation programs benefited not

only students and school personnel, but also home and community.

Students from elementary through high school have seen benefits of the peer mediation program. Students learned that issues can be resolved more effectively by talking them out rather than fighting. Mediation improved their problem solving skills as they moved from grade to grade. This process of peer modeling was a type of on the spot training that could not come from textbooks, worksheets, or lectures (Cahoon, 1988).

Peer mediation and conflict resolution provided students with a deeper understanding of themselves and other (Morse and Andrea, 1994). This program developed students' sensitivity to and awareness of the way in which others were affected by their actions. It enabled students to deal more successfully with stress and more appropriately with anger. Peer mediation taught youth to deal with conflict in a constructive, nonviolent way and fostered growth, confidence and self esteem by empowering them to make wise choices when faced with a conflict (Cutrona and Guerin, 1994). Lane and McWhirter (1992) added the additional personal benefits of practice in self-regulation, improvement in self-discipline, greater assumptions of responsibility and more openness in sharing of feelings. Peer mediation equipped students with procedures and competencies to regulate their behavior, judge what was

appropriate, improve feelings of worth and modify behavior accordingly.

Benefits to individual students involved not only personal growth and development, but also included equipping students with valuable strategies and life skills that led to growth in other areas. Some teachers believed while teachers must exercise their authority sometimes, students learned more and behaved better if they were empowered to take responsibility for their own actions and to solve their own conflicts. Leonna Eggert, author of *Anger Management for Youth*, contended that including conflict resolution skills in the curriculum and adopting peer mediation programs equipped students with skills to deal appropriately with conflict, thus enabling them to better concentrate on academic achievement (Black, 1994). Morse and Andrea (1994) added that students were given such skills as listening, critical thinking, and problem solving that were basic skills to all learning. The OCDRCM 1993 stated that teachers reported the infusion of conflict resolution into traditional courses helped students better understand the relationship between academics and the real world. In addition, the commission concluded that students learned to control their behavior in conflict situations as well as enhanced their interpersonal communication skills. The ability to deal constructively with anger and other strong emotions was increased. The

students' abilities to respect different perspectives was improved. Knowledge of non-violent options to resolve conflict was greatly increased as well. Students learned to identify common interests and achieved win-win solutions. Finally, students' abilities to analyze and understand how conflicts escalated and de-escalated was increased. The system of problem solving taught through peer mediation was uniquely suited to the personal nature of young people's problems and was used for problems they would not have taken to parents, teachers, or principals (Morse and Andrea, 1994). In conclusion, by providing students with meaningful real-life situations where they could develop a range of skills, conflict management programs prepared young adolescents for their future roles as workers, spouse, parents, and citizens (Hereford, 1993).

The positive growth of development of students involved in conflict resolution and mediation programs resulted in numerous benefits to the school. Mediation programs made students active participants in enhancing a school environment that was friendly, safe, and happy (Cahoon, 1988). Mary Beth Thompson, principal in Bowling Green, Ohio stated that peer mediation programs enhanced character education and the core values of responsibility, respect, honesty, integrity, and commitment to the common good (Shepherd, 1994.) Peer mediation sent students the

message that they had a role and responsibility in keeping the peace at school, thus maintained a school environment that was calm, comfortable and conducive to learning (Hereford, 1993). Schools involved in the OCDRCM (1993) project cited several benefits of adopting a conflict management program to the school itself. Included in these benefits were improvement of the school climate, reduction of suspensions and detentions, and time spent handling playground and lunchroom disputes. There was a reduction of name calling and put downs as well. As Koch stated in the NASSP Bulletin (1988) school administrators with mediation programs in place demonstrated that school morale improved, behavior problems were reduced, students learned basic skills and administrators and teachers had an additional option in handling behavior problems. Lane and McWhirter (1992) found similar benefits to schools and added the benefit of fewer referrals to the school nurse. In addition, Lane and McWhirter cited numerous studies that demonstrated the reduction of discipline events in schools using peer mediation. According to Araki, Takeshita, and Kadomota, the number of student fights in one Hawaii school dropped from 83 to 19 over a 2 year period. In Koch's study of a New York school, disciplinary events dropped by 50%. An Arizona school, as reported by McCormick, had a 47% decrease in the number of monthly

aggressive incidents. Burrell and Fogel cited researchers that recorded an 80% success rate for disputes mediated at a Milwaukee high school during a one year period. In addition to fewer discipline events, there was a decrease in vandalism and chronic school absence (Morse and Andrea, 1994), and truancy in schools was also reduced (Cutrona and Guerin, 1994).

In summary, Morse and Andrea (1994) stated that the use of mediation resulted in improved communication between and among students, teachers, administrators, and parents. It improved school climate and provided a forum for addressing common concerns. Since conflicts were inevitable when people interacted with one another, peer mediation could considerably reduce counterproductive and destructive behavior among students and help eradicate violence and conflict in schools.

Skills and strategies children learned in conflict resolution and peer mediation programs extended beyond the school and into the home and community. New intimacy in the family was found to be a by-product of mutually and peacefully resolved conflicts in a study by Frey, Holley, and L'Abate. In addition, reports from families on improved self-discipline at home, better listening, and more effective resolution of conflicts were



listed a benefits (Lane and McWhirter, 1992). With its emphasis on listening to others' points of view, Morse and Andrea (1994) suggested that peer mediation training assisted in preparing students to live in a multicultural world, increased student interest in justice and the American legal system, and encouraged a higher level of citizenship activity. In some communities, school mediators were used in churches and neighborhoods to help resolve conflicts. Students involved in conflict resolution and peer mediation have the opportunity to explore conflict from many different perspectives. When students made connections to their own lives they were able to look beyond and started developing a way of thinking that helped build peaceful relationships in their world. Conflict resolution skills were probably one of the most valuable life skills in helping students become responsible members of their communities (Newton, 1993). Cutrona and Guerin (1994) concluded that youth who learned to resolve conflicts were more likely to do the same when they grew up.

In summary, the benefits of peer mediation began with the student, extended through the school environment and continued into family and community life. The skills learned by students through peer mediation benefited them personally and gave them a greater ability to deal with

conflict throughout their lives. The school environment improved as a result of more student involvement in creating a safer climate and a reduction in staff time spent on resolving conflicts. Benefits due to student involvement in peer mediation were also witnessed at home and in the community. Because of the above benefits, many schools have implemented peer mediation as an alternative conflict management program to teach students conflict resolution skills.

### **The Teaching of Conflict Resolution Skills Through Peer Mediation Programs**

Schools used various approaches to teaching students conflict management skills. The most effective approach was when all students, staff, administrators, and parents were provided an opportunity to practice and learn conflict management skills and were given the option of resolving disputes through mediation (Black, 1994).

Initiating training for conflict resolution programs called for creativity. There are many ways to approach the training as there were individuals and schools. Susan Black advised joining a group that fosters peer mediation programs. (See Appendix A). With the help of the group or a local bar association a professional mediator should be

contacted. The next step was obtaining the services of a qualified person to train a small group of teachers who would subsequently train a group of student mediators (Black, 1994). In addition to training contracts with consultants, other traditional ways of instituting training for peer mediation programs included foundation grants, government grants, and occasionally a salaried position within a school or school district (Cutrona and Guerin, 1994). Training for both students and staff consisted of intensive activity-based instruction. It involved developing foundation skills of understanding conflict, non-verbal communication, reflective listening, and the specific steps of the mediation model (Morse and Andrea, 1994).

The training sequence began with a presentation of the mediation program to the entire school staff. Training of teachers and support personnel was initiated and included communication skills that encompassed active listening, reflection of feeling, message clarification, body language, giving "I messages," brainstorming, types of questioning, and effective problem solving. The sequence of the mediation process was identified and adult responsibilities in the process were discussed. Role play was used extensively with the adult staff members as it was later with the students (Lane and McWhirter, 1992). Karen C.

Evans (1994) suggested that this initial staff training should include members of the school parent group because it was important for them to understand the principles of mediation. Evans also encouraged the participation of the entire staff in the training to ensure understanding of the program and increased involvement. In addition to this general staff training, a faculty site coordinator received further training to learn the rudiments of mediation and the necessary procedures for administering the school's program. This supplemental training focused on program implementation which included the following:

1. Benefits of a mediation program in a school
2. Step-by step guide of program set up
3. How to select materials for training
4. How to bring other faculty on board
5. How to inform the rest of the students about the program
6. Trouble shooting
7. A variety of models to help tailor a program to individual needs
8. Options for scheduling
9. Follow-up ideas for meeting of student mediators
10. Encouragement for further training (Evans, 1994).

Once the adults were trained, they planned and scheduled an

orientation assembly to motivate students and make them aware of the qualities a good mediator possesses. Role playing and skits were used to demonstrate the peer mediation process (Lane and McWhirter, 1992).

As the implementation of the program neared, students who wished to become peer mediators nominated themselves or were nominated by others. Nominations also came from counselors, teachers, and administrators. Evans (1994) suggested that students were instructed to nominate peers in their classroom whom they considered trustworthy and whom they would be comfortable talking with about a problem. Black (1994) suggested that most often students nominated "natural leaders" such as star athletes and student council officers to be mediators. Sometimes that included former gang members and others who have had scrapes in school. One high school counselor suggested that it did not take a perfect kid to help other kids, but instead someone the students thought would be fair and could handle the job. Araki and Takeshita (1991) offered a composite of characteristics of an effective mediator. These characteristics included the following:

1. Had confidence and strong character
2. Perceived as a leader
3. Had good understanding of the conflict management process

4. Wrote agreements clearly
5. Was responsibly directive
6. Was caring and helped others
7. Was a good listener and questioner

Students needed to consider these qualities in nominating and selecting peer mediators.

The faculty coordinator tabulated the votes and presented them to a faculty committee for consideration. This committee needed to determine if the students chosen were capable of maintaining their grades and if the school population was represented racially, academically, and socio-economically (Evans, 1994). Students that had been selected were trained by adult staff members, sometimes with the of a community mediation training consultant. Training for middle school students was five half days. Communication skills were taught by the adult staff members. The staff members guided the students through role plays similar to those engaged in during adult training.

The mediation sequence was introduced and practiced until it became a comfortable process for the students. Four basic stages were involved in this sequence, including introduction, listening, wants, and solutions.

Another approach for the selection and training of student mediators was used at the William E. Ferron Elementary School in Las Vegas, Nevada. Each teacher selected two students as mediators for his or her classroom. These students reported to the principal's office during their recess to learn how to be effective mediators. During this orientation, three major points, which included setting the stage, mediator responsibilities, and items mediators are not held responsible for, were addressed (Cahoon, 1988).

Dr. Karen Evans had outlined a training program for student mediators that included 10 to 15 hours of training divided into 10 sessions. Session one included a welcome and introduction of participants followed by discussion of expectations that a conflict manager does and does not do. (See Appendix B). It also included demonstrations, practice and role plays of effective communication skills and active listening. (See Appendix B). Session two dealt with conflict and beliefs necessary for the success of conflict management programs. (Appendix B). During session three, mediators learned that solving their own problems, respecting the rights of others, building mutual respect and behaving positively, were positive results of resolving conflicts. Stage one of the mediation process, opening the session and

setting the guidelines, was also discussed and practiced. (See Appendix B). Students continued to practice stage one of the mediation process during session four. They role played how to deal with disputants who broke rules. Stage two of the mediation process during which disputants described what happened, was covered during session five. Mediators practiced active listening and paraphrasing. During session six, stage two was reviewed and practiced and stage three, creating solutions and choosing the best, was introduced. In session seven, students discussed the responsibility of conflict managers., the traits of a good resolution, practiced stage three, and were introducedd to stage four, reviewing the resolution and choosing an appropriate resolution. (See Appendix B). A review and practice of stage four was completed during session eight. Session nine provided mediators with practice in how to handle difficult situations. The last session was a practice and review, and included a written test and role plays by groups. (See Appendix B). During these 10 sessions, Dr. Evans included a great deal of review and practice using necessary communication skills and role playing stages of the mediation process. Students were given the opportunity to become familiar and comfortable with their roles as conflict managers (Evans, 1994).

After determining prosocial expectations, educating staff and



students in the mediation process, and choosing and training student mediators, it was critical to reinforce the mediation process each day in the classroom. According to Canter (1994) there were specific steps to take to encourage and reinforce the process in the classroom. These included the following:

1. Model prosocial behavior
2. Use teachable moments to reinforce prosocial behavior
3. Integrate the teaching of prosocial behavior into the curriculum

Social situations appeared throughout the range of classroom learning. Because the nature of the classroom environment, the students were always in a social situation. Varying the activities and discussions, but keeping the mediation objectives in mind, peacemaking skills were integrated into the curriculum. Repetition was critical to a student's absorption of any new understanding. Any type of change takes time, practice and adaptation. Enjoyable and fun lessons enhanced students grasp of the material. The more these skills were taught and used every day in the classroom, the sooner a safe, caring, peaceful classroom would be established. (Drew, 1987). By teaching students conflict resolution skills in the fifth and sixth grades, a foundation was laid for lifelong interpersonal relationships and citizenship. For suggested lessons see the

"Handbook," a compilation of lessons found through New Mexico Center for  
Dispute Resolution.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the procedures, development and implementation of the project study to determine the merits of peer mediation as a method of conflict resolution. It also describes the subjects and the setting at the fifth and sixth grade middle school where the project study was conducted. A timeline and detailed description of the procedures and activities that were used to implement the project objectives are also included in this chapter.

#### Subjects and Setting for the Project

The setting for the project was a fifth and sixth grade middle school located in central Ohio. The facility, Pickerington Middle School, was built in the early 1900's.

Prior to the 1992-93 school year, the middle school housed the sixth, seventh, and eighth grades. In 1992, as a result of the opening of the new high school, the middle school was changed to accommodate all fifth and sixth grade students in the district. Before that move was made, some changes and renovations were made in the building to better accommodate these grade levels. In 1994 four portable classrooms were added to keep up with the growing student population.

The current middle school consisted of 45 classroom teachers, 2 administrators, 2 guidance counselors and 30 support staff. There are 18 fifth grade classrooms, and the teachers work in teams of two. The sixth grade consists of 20 classrooms, and the teachers work in teams of four.

The student population, approximately 1,000, at the middle school came from three different elementary schools in the district. The classes were compiled of a mixture of students from these three elementary buildings, and the majority of classes were heterogeneously grouped. Two of the fifth grade classes were made up entirely of the gifted students. Two more of the fifth grade classes were combined to form an inclusion unit in which fifth grade learning disabled students were placed. In sixth grade, learning disabled students are included on one team. The specific classes used for the pilot program in the project study were four fifth grade classrooms averaging 26 students.

The subjects for this project also included all the teachers/administrators on the Peer Mediation Committee, and Dr. Karen Evans, the professional speaker who outlined the peer mediation program to the staff and students. Most of the focus of this project study was directed towards the fifth grade class which consists of approximately 450 students, since the current sixth graders would be at the junior high

building in the 1995-96 school year.

### Project Timeline

The timeline to research the merits of and develop a peer mediation program for the fifth and sixth grade middle school was ten months in duration. The specific steps and detailed description to carry out the practicum were as follows:

September, 1994

1. At the beginning of the 1995 - 96 school year the assistant principal asked for volunteers to serve on a peer mediation committee.
2. At the first peer mediation committee meeting staff members signed up for sub-committees.
3. One sub-committee was set up to write a philosophy and mission statement to be reviewed at the next meeting.
4. The research sub-committee began to compile data on the topic of conflict resolution and peer mediation.

October, 1994

1. The four people working on this practicum signed up for the steering, research, visitation, and training sub-committees.
2. At the second meeting the philosophy and mission statement were read, altered, and approved by the committee.

November, 1994

1. A high school spokesperson and student committee from our district discussed and modeled the mediation process for the committee.
2. Visitations to other districts began and research data were assessed and analyzed.

December, 1994

1. Visitations took place during this time and research was still being compiled.

January, 1995

1. Continued to gather, assess, and analyze research data on the topic.
2. Contacted area facilities to determine a location for presentation of peer mediation program to the staff.

February, 1995

1. The research sub-committee presented a representation of collected data at the February meeting.
2. The visitation sub-committee reported findings from school visitations.
3. Selected a suitable date and reserved facility for April 12 dinner meeting.

4. Work was begun to design a program specifically for Pickerington Middle School.

5. Retained speaker for the April 12 dinner meeting.

March, 1995

1. Steering committee attended peer mediation training workshops.

2. Continued work on specific program for a peer mediation program for Pickerington Middle School.

3. Collected data on playground and classroom conflicts.

4. Compiled classroom materials to integrate conflict resolution in the curriculum, and began using these materials in pilot classrooms.

April, 1995

1. Set up staff development day to train the staff on the peer mediation procedures.

2. Evaluated pilot peer mediation program.

3. Finalized peer mediation program for middle school.

4. The dinner meeting was held on April 12 for the staff.

May, 1995

1. Selected and trained student mediators and staff.

A committee was organized at the middle school to explore the benefits and methods of peer mediation as a method of conflict resolution.

A school-wide meeting was held by the assistant principal to further explore this topic, and volunteers were asked to serve on this committee. At the end of the first meeting of the Peer Mediation committee, many sub-committees were formed in order to more effectively cover all the aspects of this program. One committee was assigned the task of writing a philosophy and mission statement. The research committee began to gather data on peer mediation.

When the October meeting of the peer mediation committee was held, the members of the sub-committees were finalized. The steering, research, visitation, and training sub-committees were selected in order to be able to explore in depth as many facets of peer mediation as possible. The members who had written the philosophy and mission statement read these to the entire committee to see if there were any alterations that needed to be made. After a brief discussion, the philosophy and mission statements were approved by the committee.

In November, student representatives and a spokesperson from the local high school came to the committee meeting and discussed their peer mediation program. After a general introduction of the background of the program used at the high school by the spokesperson, two student mediators modeled the process as it was done in an actual mediation



situation. The mediators went through the process step-by-step while two other students played the role of the disputants. This enabled the committee to see first hand how this process was used. After their presentation, the method used in training the mediators was discussed and questions were asked about the success of the program in effectively settling student disputes. The next step for the committee was to visit other school districts using this method of conflict resolution. The scheduling of visits began. The research committee continued to gather data to be assessed and analyzed for a better understanding of this topic.

In December and January school districts were chosen for visitations and dates were selected. Arrangements were made with these school districts and substitute teachers were attained for those staff members doing the visitations.

The research sub-committee presented a representation of collected data at the peer mediation meeting. Material was distributed to the committee for their information as to some of the research that was being reviewed and analyzed in order to formulate a program for Pickerington Middle School. At this meeting, also, members of the visitation sub-committee reported their findings from the several districts that had been observed. The questionnaire was helpful in

enabling them to cover many questions that the committee felt were important to ask districts already involved in this process. The visitation committee felt that observing other school districts was very helpful and provided insight into several different alternatives that were used. The date of April 12 was selected for the dinner meeting presentation at Berwick, and a speaker was also retained to provide the staff with more information on the peer mediation program. After much research and preparation, work was begun to create a program specifically to meet the needs of Pickerington Middle School.

While an appropriate peer mediation program was being formulated, members of the steering committee were attending peer mediation workshops. The workshops were designed to train staff members in the peer mediation process, and to enable them to train the student mediators. The instructor of the workshops was hired as a consultant to help the middle school develop and implement its program. The curriculum committee compiled and distributed materials to enable teachers to integrate conflict resolution into the curriculum. Students in four pilot classrooms were given information on the mediation process and were taught and role-played using the skills necessary for conflict management.

During April, a staff development meeting was arranged to further train the staff on the peer mediation process. The pilot program being used in four classrooms was discussed with the committee and evaluated on its success. The pilot program was beneficial in finalizing the peer mediation program for Pickerington Middle School. The dinner meeting to present the program to the entire staff was held on April 12. Teachers were asked to fill out an evaluation in response to the meeting. (See Appendix D). Additional training was planned for an August teacher professional development day.

The mediation consultant conducted four assemblies to introduce the mediation process to the student body. The students learned the necessary qualifications to be a good mediator. Following the assembly, students nominated classmates they thought would make good mediators. During the month of May, the Steering sub-committee, with the help of classroom teachers, ranked a list of fifth grade students to be trained as mediators for the following year. Permission slips were sent home with students from the list. Students were contacted until 25 students agreed and had permission to participate as peer mediators. The mediation consultant was contracted and a 12 hour training schedule was set up in August, a week before the start of the school year. Staff

members were selected, including the Steering sub-committee, to participate in the training. Dates were chosen in October of the next school to select and train new fifth graders as mediators. The four pilot classrooms continued activities involving conflict management and mediation. The teachers in the pilot classrooms practiced the mediation process to settle conflicts and disputes. Students completed journal entries and were interviewed about conflict management and mediation. Meeting dates were scheduled during the summer to further plan and prepare for the mediator training sessions and the staff professional day.

### DESIGN

The design of this study was Action Research. This study used a variety of formal and informal procedures in the research process. During the time frame of the study, research was gathered to determine the merits of conflict management and peer mediation at Pickerington Middle School. Conclusions were drawn through analytical interpretation of journal entries, surveys of both student and staff input, anecdotal records, role playing, and observations of student interactions.

### INSTRUMENTATION

The goals of this project handbook were to examine the concept of peer mediation, to determine if this type of conflict resolution program was

effective for a fifth and sixth grade middle school, and to develop selection, training, and assessment procedures to be used by teachers in the middle school. The goals were implemented including the following:

Objective 1: To Examine Peer Mediation as a Conflict Resolution Plan by Researching Available Literature and by Visiting Districts that Currently use this Type of Program.

Formal and informal records were kept of conversations, interactions, and reflections of peer mediation users and observers. Research was also analyzed to determine if peer mediation was an effective style of conflict resolution to be used in the middle school environment. Several other school districts that were currently using peer mediation were visited by staff members. A questionnaire was completed, and interviews were conducted with staff and students in the schools to determine whether their experiences with peer mediation had been effective. After all of this information was studied to determine if peer mediation was a viable method of conflict resolution for Pickerington Middle School.

Objective 2: To Design a Program Specifically for the Middle School Based on the Results of the Research and Visitations.

Journal entries and interviews were assessed to interpret student

reactions toward methods of conflict resolutions. Many students expressed the opinion that "peer mediation seemed to be a fairer way to settle conflicts." After examining the information from the pilot program, reviewing the questionnaires from the school visitations, assessing student reactions, and consulting with Dr. Karen Evans, a specialist in this field, a specific program was designed. This program was appropriate to the age of middle school students and would meet the needs of both students and staff.

Objective 3: To develop Selection, Training and Assessment Procedures for the Program.

Methods and procedures for selection, training, and assessment of peer mediation programs were studied and collected from literature researched and existing programs contacted during visitations. Members of the Steering sub-committee attended three days of training conducted by Dr. Karen Evans, a mediation consultant. This training seminar included methods and procedures for training student mediators. The seminar instructor was hired by Pickerington Middle School to help develop and implement its program. A dinner meeting was scheduled to begin training the entire staff. Dr. Evans introduced the mediation process and discussed student selection and training procedures to the staff. Teachers were

asked to fill out an evaluation form in response to the meeting. Additional training was planned for an August teacher professional development day. The schools trained mediators as well as staff members who would participate in role play situations to further familiarize them with the mediation process. Evaluation forms would again be completed by staff members following this second training session. Dr. Karen Evans conducted four assemblies to introduce the mediation process to the student body. The necessary qualifications for a good mediator were discussed and following the assembly, students nominated classmates they thought would make good mediators. (See Appendix E). In addition, class discussions were held following the assembly. Teachers observed and noted students' reactions and comments about the assembly and the process of mediation. A questionnaire was completed by students and evaluated. Class discussions and journals were completed following the assembly to enable teachers to observe student reactions. The Steering sub-committee with the help of classroom teachers, ranked a list of fifth grade students to be trained for the following year. Students were contacted until 25 students agreed and had permission to participate as peer mediators. A 12 hour training schedule was set up in August to train these students as mediators for the sixth grade. (See Appendix C).

Training and selection of new middle school students to serve as fifth grade mediators was scheduled for October of the following school year. Due to insufficient time for training of student mediators, it was concluded that any mediation of conflict would be conducted in the pilot program, with teachers acting as mediators. The four pilot classrooms engaged in activities teaching conflict resolution skills and the mediation process. Following these activity sessions, students completed journal entries, surveys, and questionnaires and participated in role plays in reaction to conflict resolution and the mediation process.

The focus of this handbook "The Practice of Peer Mediation Using Conflict Management Skills At The Middle School Level (Grades 5 - 6) was to explore the merits of peer mediation as an effective method of conflict resolution and to examine the ability of students to responsibly solve conflicts on their own. The data suggested there is measurable support for the use of the peer mediation process as a method of conflict resolution and management. After exposure to the conflict management lessons during the pilot program, students and teachers were able to recognize and identify more appropriate, positive ways of dealing with conflict. Further, the data suggested that the use of peer mediation provided a safer learning environment and provided students with valuable



communication and problem solving skills to be used throughout life.

Students, staff, and parents involved during the implementation of this program were enthusiastic and positive about the potential benefits and merits of peer mediation.

CHAPTER IV

HANDBOOK: THE PRACTICE OF PEER MEDIATION  
USING CONFLICT MANAGEMENT SKILLS  
AT THE MIDDLE SCHOOL LEVEL  
(GRADES 5/6)



## LESSON ONE

### OBJECTIVES:

1. Students will be able to define the word conflict.
2. Students will be able to name feelings that they associate with conflict.

### PROCEDURES:

1. Define the word conflict.

A conflict is what happens when one or more people can't agree on something. Most of us are involved in conflicts every day. I might have a conflict with myself about whether or not to watch T.V. tonight. You and your best friend might have a conflict about what to do after school or perhaps two kickball teams might have a conflict about the rules of their game. Conflicts happen because we all think and sometimes have different opinions about things. This is part of what makes us human.

2. Ask the students if they can think of any conflict which they have seen or been involved in recently. Ask them if they would like to briefly describe some of these conflicts.

3. Ask students to think of how conflicts make them feel. They should then brainstorm negative and positive feelings that come to mind when they think about conflicts they've been in. Explain that while we often have negative feelings about conflict, it is part of our daily lives and we must learn how to handle it. Conflict can be positive if we learn how to get along with people better because of it.

## LESSON TWO

### OBJECTIVES:

Students will be able to recognize different conflict resolution styles.

### PROCEDURES:

1. Discuss the three different ways that a conflict can be dealt with: Denial, confrontation, problem solving. Write these words on the board.

DENIAL happens when someone is angry because of a conflict or fight. Instead of saying what is making them mad, they deny that there is a problem and that they are feeling angry. The difficulty with trying to end a conflict this way is that it doesn't really end because the other person never knows what is wrong or why the first person is mad at them. Hence, it is unlikely that they will act differently next time.

**CONFRONTATION** happens when there is a conflict and one person attacks the other, either physically or verbally. This usually happens when two people are not willing to listen to each other's side of the problem or talk about it. Instead, they attack the other's ideas or worth.

**PROBLEM-SOLVING** is when people talk about the problem without insulting or blaming each other. They know they have a problem and try to think of many ways to solve it. Then they choose the solution that will be the best for everybody.

2. Read "One Story with Three Different Endings". Read each ending and discuss the following questions with each story:

- a. Does this solution make someone angry?
- b. Were the boys listening to each other and understanding each other's feelings?
- c. Were anyone's feelings hurt? Whose?
- d. Was everyone happy at the end of the story? Who was? Who wasn't?
- e. Can you tell what kind of conflict resolution style is being used in this story?

3. Ask the students to break up into groups of four or five. Have each group go to different area of the room, accompanied by one of the facilitators. Give each group one of the index cards with Denial-Confrontation- or Problem-solving written on it.

Ask each group to prepare a skit which presents a conflict that is ended using the resolution style written on the index card they have been given.

## ONE STORY WITH THREE DIFFERENT ENDINGS

### Story

Omar and Lou are playing basketball taking turns shooting at the basket. Peter comes over and asks if he can play too.

### Ending #1

Omar says "Sure." Lou doesn't like Peter very much and would rather that he didn't play with them. Instead of saying anything, he just shrugs his shoulders and plays half-heartedly. Whenever it's Peter's turn, Lou throws the ball at him much too hard and, two or three times, he shoves Peter out of the way when it isn't necessary. After a few minutes of this, Peter asks him what's bugging him. He sighs and says "Nothing."

### Ending #2

Omar says, "Sure!" but Lou says, "Forget it!" Peter walks up to Lou and says, "How come I can't play?" Lou tells him that he hates playing ball with him because he always cheats and he hogs the ball so that no one else can have a turn. Peter says, "You're a liar. You just don't want me to play because I can run faster than you and I'm a better basketball player. "Lou is mad now and says, "You'd better get out of here before I kick your butt!" Peter says, "You just try it punk. " Lou moves forward and looks like he's about to fight and Peter runs away to the other side of the playground.



Ending #3

Omar says "Sure!" but Lou says "Forget it!" Omar says, "Why don't you want him to play with us?" Lou says "Because then I'll have to wait longer for turns." Peter points out to Lou that he and Omar have been playing together for all of recess so far and that really the ball belongs to the class, not him. Omar agrees with Peter that it is the classes' ball and offers to let Peter take turns with him and trade off after every three basket shots so that no one will have to wait out too long. Lou says that he doesn't mind if the three of them stand around the hoop and each take turns one after the other because it will probably be easier than just Omar and Peter taking turns and more fair too. They all agree on this and start to play.

## LESSON THREE

### OBJECTIVES:

1. Help students increase their emotion-related vocabularies.
2. Help students identify how other people are feeling.

MATERIALS: Ten to fifteen cards with one emotion printed on each.

### PROCEDURES:

1. Have a student draw a card and read the emotion listed. The other children should react with their faces and bodies to the feeling.
2. Alternatively, have a student draw a card and, without showing the class, react. The class tries to guess the emotion noted on the card.
3. After activity discuss how body language tells us how a person feels.  
Can people say one thing with their bodies and another with their words?  
How would body language be used in conflict?

### LIST OF FEELING WORDS

angry	frustrated	mixed up
scared	anxious	furios
pleased	confused	mad
glad	proud	discouraged
happy	nervous	cheated
hopeful	surprised	worried
left out	embarrassed	hopeless
uncertain	impressed	alone
upset	picked on	jealous

## LESSON FOUR

### OBJECTIVE:

Help students understand emotions from nonverbal communication.

### PROCEDURES:

1. Focus on one emotion (for instance, mad) each time you do this activity.

Have the children perform different actions in a way that reflects that emotion. (For instance, have them walk, smile, sweep floor, talk, all in a mad way.)

2. Once they have the idea, have them suggest actions to act out in a feeling way. .

3. Discuss: How do people let you know what they're feeling without expressing it in words? What clues could you watch for? What things make you feel \_\_\_\_\_?

## LESSON FIVE

### OBJECTIVE:

To learn to identify speakers' feelings.

### PROCEDURES:

1. Read the following sentence to students. Have them raise their hand and give you the feeling behind each answer. There may be more than one answer because there can be more than one feeling, or way of interpreting the sentences.
2. Allow students to respond to each sentence before going on to another.

### UNDERSTANDING FEELINGS EXERCISE

1. "I just can't figure it out. I give up." Person is saying, I'm:
2. "Wow! Eight days until Christmas vacation."
3. "Look at the picture I drew!"
4. "Will you be calling my parents?"
5. "What a drag, there's nothing to do."
6. "I'll never do that well. He always does better than me and I practice."
7. "I'd like to tell him that, but I just can't. He'd probably punch me!"
8. "Leave me alone. Nobody cares what happens to me, anyway."
9. "I can do this part on my own. I don't need your help."
10. "Am I doing this report right? Do you think it will be good enough?"

11. "Yeah, I guess I was mean to him. I shouldn't have done it."
12. "I feel like writing in my book. It's mine anyway."
13. "You never get mad at him, always at me."

## LESSON SIX

### OBJECTIVE:

To motivate students to be good listeners. To help students identify good and poor listening behavior.

### PROCEDURES:

1. Ask students: Why is listening important? Answers should include:

- to get information
- to learn
- to understand
- to know how someone feels
- enjoyment
- to find out what you need
- to share and be close to someone you like
- to defend yourself against blame or danger

2. With a partner, show poor listening. As your partner speaks:

- look away
- look bored
- interrupt
- look at your watch
- laugh in an inappropriate place

3. Next, as your partner speaks, demonstrate active listening by:

- keeping eye contact
- facing partner
- nodding
- smiling
- not interrupting

4. Divide students into pairs. Decide who is person A and B.

5. Instruct all A's to tell their partners a story for two minutes about the best thing that ever happened to them.

6. Secretly instruct all B's to listen to their partners, using all the poor listening actions they previously discussed.

7. At the end of two minutes, instruct A's to continue talking for another minute, but this time secretly instruct the B's to use the good listening techniques.

8. At the end of this activity, it is now the B's turn to tell a story for two minutes about the best thing that ever happened to them.

9. Again, secretly instruct the A's to listen to their partners, using all the poor listening practices they can remember, then, continue with story, but this time have the A's use their good listening techniques.
  
10. Bring pairs together into a large group and discuss how it felt when the partners were ignoring the stories.

#### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. When your partner didn't pay attention to you, how did you feel about him/her?
2. How did you feel about yourself?
3. When your partner listened carefully, how did you feel about him/her?
4. How did you feel about yourself?
5. How do you think a person feels when you really listen to him/her?
6. How does a person act when you really listen to him/her?
7. How does a person act when you don't pay attention to him/her?
8. How can you show someone that you are listening carefully?



## LESSON SEVEN

### OBJECTIVES:

To teach students to communicate needs and wants in a non-threatening manner.

### PROCEDURES:

1. Begin by telling the class that you are going to speak to them two times about the same subject, and they must listen carefully and "tune-in" to themselves to see how they feel as they hear the two messages. Then, say to the students something to this effect, being very careful to begin each statement with the word, you:

YOU STUDENTS KEEP MESSING AROUND DURING CLASS. YOU DON'T TAKE THESE LESSONS SERIOUSLY. YOU JUST PLAY AROUND AND YOU DON'T GET SERIOUS WHEN I ASK YOU TO. YOU REALLY MAKE ME FEEL BAD. YOU'D BETTER SHAPE UP.

2. Then, tell all the students that you have just said the first message. Then, say something to this effect, being very careful to begin each sentence with the word, I.

I SEE A LOT OF LAUGHING AND PLAYING AROUND DURING CLASS. I'M VERY UPSET ABOUT IT. IT'S IMPORTANT TO ME THAT YOU LEARN ABOUT CONFLICT RESOLUTION BUT I'M AFRAID YOU DON'T TAKE IT SERIOUSLY ENOUGH. I FEEL BAD BECAUSE I WANT YOU TO WORK HARD AND LEARN.

3. Discuss how the messages made you feel. Even though they were saying the same thing that the class was doing, they were very different. What was the main difference between the two messages? How did you feel during the first message? How did you feel during the second message?

4. Discuss the differences between using you and I. Help students focus on what the differences are by telling them that there is one word that you use a lot in the first message and a different word which you use a lot in the second message.

5. Focus students attention on the difference between the two messages. How "I" is straightforward, honest, easily respected, while "you" is accusing or blaming. It makes people feel like they have to defend themselves and makes them feel ready to fight. Discuss important of using I messages to avoid conflicts.

6. Take turns delivering "you" messages. Then have students take those same sentences and turn them into "I" messages.

## LESSON EIGHT

### OBJECTIVE:

Help students understand rules of fair fighting.

### PROCEDURES:

1. Give class a game without rules. Line students up in four rows and give each person at the front a paperclip. Then tell class to play the game. When they begin to ask questions about rules, discuss why we need rules.
2. Pass out Worksheet A. Explain that people also need rules when they have a conflict. Read and discuss the six rules for fair fighting. Ask students if they want to add or change any of the rules.
3. Review "What Do You Win?" and discuss. Ask students if they lose anything when a conflict is handled fairly.

# FIGHTING FAIR

What is the other person's side of the story?

We both have the same feelings even if we disagree.

Ancient history doesn't count.

Name calling doesn't help.

Blaming won't do any good

What is making me angry?

## RULES FOR FIGHTING FAIR

1. Identify the problem.
2. Focus on the problem.
3. Attack the *problem*, not the person.
4. Listen with an open mind.
5. Treat the other person's feelings with respect.
6. Take responsibility for your actions.

In a tug of war or a boxing match it's *you against me* with rules for fighting fair. However, a real conflict situation should not be like a tug of war, but *you and me together* against a common problem.

It's difficult to fight fair when we are fighting mad. We feel threatened and often our angry emotions block our good judgments. Fortunately, there are rules we can learn to fight fair in a real conflict situation. By learning these rules we can become capable conflict solvers and be more caring people.

**Remember, the goal of fighting fair is to make everyone a winner!**

### WHAT DO YOU WIN?

There is better understanding.  
Feelings are brought into the open.  
People respect each other.

There is a feeling of trust.  
Everyone feels good about the solution.  
No one is hurt, physically or emotionally.

### PUTTING IT TOGETHER:

Solve the following conflicts, first unfairly and then fairly.

SITUATION	UNFAIRLY	FAIRLY
Two kids want the same book.		
Someone calls your friend a bad name.		
You want to go to the movies; your mom wants you to do chores.		

### YOUR CHALLENGE!

Reread the above situations. Tell what both people "won" when the conflict was resolved fairly.

## LESSON NINE

### OBJECTIVE:

Students learn to identify some behaviors that make conflict grow larger, so they can follow the Rules for Fighting Fair.

### PROCEDURES:

1. Explain to the class that everyone likes to be treated with respect. Some things we do in fighting make hurt and angry feelings even worse, and the fight gets bigger, not smaller.
2. Students will understand it is everyone's responsibility to make sure his or her own behavior is fair. They will have a chance to avoid certain patterns of unfair fighting. Stress that they can change a fight by fighting fair, even if the either person isn't.
3. Write the following unfair fighting patterns on the board, go over examples of each. Have the group decide which pattern is going on. The group may choose one situation and act it out using the rules and "I" messages.

## UNFAIR FIGHTING

Not listening

Put downs-making fun of others

Name game-calling names

Blame game-it's never my fault.

Excuses-lots of reasons why

Threatening

Past history-bring up problems from another day.

1. "You always pick on me. Yesterday you got me in trouble!"
2. "You thief!"
3. "You're the dumbest person I ever met!"
4. "You're dead meat after school!"
5. "I couldn't help it. I just wanted the ball."
6. "You shouldn't mess with me. It's all your fault."
7. "I didn't hear you say you wanted to play."

## LESSON TEN

### OBJECTIVES:

1. Understand that there are many possible solutions to a conflict.
2. Practice resolving conflicts through role play.

### PROCEDURES:

1. Introduce topic of problem solving and why it is important to think of as many solutions as possible when beginning to solve a problem.
2. Brainstorm for different ideas or solutions to problems the students think of. Make sure students understand these rules when brainstorming:
  - a. Offer every idea that comes to mind.
  - b. Do not criticize any idea that is offered (your own or anyone else's).
  - c. Come up with as many ideas as you can.
3. Define the word "consequence". Now go back and discuss the consequences of each of the ideas on the list. Encourage students to consider such things as:
  - a. What might happen if you try this solution?
  - b. What are the immediate consequences?

- c. What are the long-term consequences?
- d. Is it fair and realistic?
- e. Will anyone involved be unhappy with this solution?

4. Divide class into pairs. Assign work sheet B. Have the pairs play the conflicts and resolve them.

5. As a class, discuss the resolutions the groups reached. Discuss the different resolutions reached for the same conflict.





How do I act in a conflict situation?



# When I am in a Conflict...

Conflict	What I Do	How I Feel
Someone takes my place in line.		
Someone calls me a name.		
I can't find my scissors. I see them on Adam's desk.		
Someone pushes me on the bus.		
my mother tells me I can't go out because my room isn't clean.		
Another student says I broke her pencil.		
An older student takes away my ball on the playground.		

## LESSON ELEVEN

### OBJECTIVES:

Use problem solving skills to reduce anger and resolve conflicts.

### PROCEDURES:

1. Distribute worksheet C called "Terry's Story". Assign two students to read the parts of Terry and his mother.
2. Discuss questions following the story.
3. Ask students to analyze the conflict and record responses to the chart on the board.
4. Have students complete chart. Discuss in small groups.
5. Have students role play an ending to Terry's story. Pair them up, then discuss the different solutions the groups acted out.

# TERRY'S STORY



My family has just finished dinner. Robert is watching television. Anna has begun her homework. I am on the telephone. Suddenly my Mom explodes, "How come all of you become so busy when it's time to do the dishes? Every night it's the same old story."

I respond angrily, "From the minute you get home from work, you begin picking on me!"



Sound familiar? When other people's anger is directed towards us, we often respond in the same way. Why is it that another's angry feelings bring out our own?

Do you think it is possible to respond to an angry person in a calm and courteous way? What effect might that have on an angry person? Let's go back to the story and analyze the conflict.

IDENTIFY THE CONFLICT:	FEELINGS:	PERCEPTION OF THE PROBLEM:
	Mom _____	Mom _____
	Terry _____	Terry _____

**REMEMBER:** When other people are angry with you, STOP and think! What is making the person angry? How are you contributing to the problem? How can you help the situation?



## PUTTING IT TOGETHER:

Complete the following chart as honestly as you can

ANGRY PERSON	WHY SHE/HE GETS ANGRY WITH ME	HOW I CAN HELP THE SITUATION
parent		
brother/sister		
teacher		
friend		
classmate		
other		

## YOUR CHALLENGE!

Write an ending for Terry's story, so that the conflict ends in a constructive manner.

## LESSON TWELVE

### OBJECTIVE:

To make students familiar with the peer mediation program and their role as peer mediators.

### PROCEDURES:

1. Explain the skills the students have been working on will now help them become peer mediators. Explain that peer mediators are people who don't take sides, don't judge, but help people resolve their conflicts. Explain that students will be allowed to be peer mediators at their school if they can agree to the following rules.
  - a. Be a good role model for the younger students.
  - b. Remember we are to listen, and help resolve, not judge and give the disputants a solution.
  - c. Agree to work with a partner on the playground on your assigned day.
  - d. Wear the Peer Mediator badge, and carry a clipboard with mediation sheets.
  - e. Fill out the sheets after each mediation, and turn in to the adult in charge.

2. Review, and describe each step as follows:

"George and Maria are yelling at each other on the playground."

You should:

- a. Introduce yourselves: I'm \_\_\_\_\_ and this is \_\_\_\_\_. We're the peer mediators on duty now.
- b. Ask both parties if they want to solve their problem with you or go on having problems until a teacher steps in.
- c. If yes, go to the area assigned for solving problems.  
(To be picked at an earlier date)
- d. Explain and get agreement to four rules:
  - Agree to solve the problem;
  - Do not interrupt;
  - Tell the truth;
  - No name calling.Make sure the students do not break the rules.
- e. Peer mediators will decide which students will talk first, and decide which peer mediator will focus on which students.
- f. Ask person #1 what s/he thinks happened and how she/he feels.  
Focus the student on the facts only.
- g. Repeat back what #1 said. Summarize and use Active Listening, drawing out feelings. The goal here is for student #2 to really hear how student #1 sees the problem and feels about it. Make sure that student #2 hears what is said.

- h. Ask person #2 what happened and how she/he feels. Again, focus on facts, not name-calling and accusations.
- i. Repeat back what person #2 said, using Active Listening. Be sure that person #1 hears it. Ask "Did you hear what \_\_\_\_\_said?"
- j. Ask person #1 for other solutions-what could you do next time so this problem won't happen again?
- k. Ask person #2 for other solutions.
- l. Help students get a solution which they both think is good. Make sure neither is pressured into accepting a decision. If neither can come up with or agree on solutions, remind them that they agreed with rule #1-agree to solve the problem.
- m. After the agreement, congratulate them both, have them shake hands.
- n. Fill out the peer mediation form, and turn in to adult in charge.

3. Now using another adult, demonstrate the process. If possible, use all adults for the four roles.

4. Discuss how the students felt the students were being treated. Discuss what they liked, or disliked about the process.

5. Now break into groups, and have the students do the role-playing on worksheet D.

## ROLE PLAY STORIES

Choose one of these stories to tell each time there is a role play. Students will take the parts of the disputants from the story. Encourage disputants to think about how they would feel if the events in the story happened to them. They should keep their own names and genders. These are all recess situations, though some could happen in the classroom as well. At some point during training or meetings, use student observations to make up role plays.

1. Some children are jumping rope. Several students approach the teacher asking to have one person taken out of the game. They say that that person is too rough and not following the rules. The student wants to keep playing. The Student Mediators come up and offer to help.
2. Students are pulling and tugging over a ball. Each says that the other is not following the rules of the game.
3. Two children are looking at each other very angrily and getting ready to hit. One says: "You're always taking things. I saw you with my pencil in class." The other says: "Leave me alone. You're just a liar and a tattletale. I found a red pencil on the floor, so I was using it."
4. Two children are shouting at each other. One says that he (she) will beat the other one up on the way home, because of namecalling. The other one says to leave his (her) little brother alone and stop picking on him.
5. One child did better than another on a test. She (he) jokes the other child about it, saying, "Better luck next time," in a teasing way. The second child begins to chase the first one in a very angry way.
6. A student broke a school rule. Another student told the principal. Now the two are having a conflict at lunch. . . . .
7. One child wore the same clothes to school for three days. Other students teased him (her). He (she) is threatening them back. A conflict begins.
8. A student approaches the Student Mediators and says that another student is being very mean to her (him). The other student comes up and says that they used to be friends until the first student told the other kids to leave the second student alone and not be her (his) friend.
9. Two students have to share a computer and play a game together. They are arguing at recess. One says, "You always butt in and take my turn." The other says, "You're too slow. If I wait for you, we'll lose the point. I'm asking the teacher for a new partner."

APPENDIX A

CONFLICT RESOLUTION PROGRAMS AND TRAINING



Here are some places to find out more about conflict resolution programs and training:

American Bar Association, Section of Dispute Resolution, 2nd Floor Lobby, 1800 M St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036; (202) 331-2258

American Bar Association, Special Committee on Youth Education for Citizenship, 541 North Fairbanks Court, Chicago, Ill. 60611-3314; (312) 988-5735. Contact: Paula Nessel.

Children's Creative Response to Conflict, Box 271, 521 North Broadway, Nyack, N.Y. 10960; (914) 353-1796.

Committee for Children, 172 20th Ave., Seattle, Wash. 98122; (800) 634-4449.

Dispute Management in the Schools Project, Hawaii State Department of Education, 2530 Tenth Ave., Building A, Honolulu, Hawaii; (808) 733-9108; Contact: Carl Takeshita.

Educators for Social Responsibility, 23 Garden St., Cambridge, Mass. 02138; (800) 370-2515.

National Association for Mediation in Education, 205 Hampshire House, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, Mass. 01003-3635; (413) 545-2462. Internet address: name@acad.umass.edu Ask for free information packet.

National Institute for Dispute Resolution, 1726 M St. N.W., Suite 500, Washington, D.C. 20036; (202) 466-4764 (extension 305) Contact: Chris Colosi.

National School Boards Association, Office of Federal and National Education Issues Advocacy, 1680 Duke St., Alexandria, Va 22314; (703) 838-6722. Ask for *Violence in the Schools, How America's School Boards are Safeguarding Your Children*.

APPENDIX B

MEDIATOR TRAINING MATERIALS/EVALUATIONS

“As a conflict manager, you will be expected to behave toward other students in the following ways:”

- ◆ Treat others fairly—do not take sides or give advice,
- ◆ Listen to others—without interrupting, judging or bossing,
- ◆ Talk in a friendly and confident manner,
- ◆ Show respect for yourself and others in what you say and do,
- ◆ Keep confidences—do not talk about other students' conflicts.

**A CONFLICT MANAGER DOES NOT**

- 1 act like a police officer,
- 2 solve problems for other students,
- 3 give advice or judge other students,
- 4 take sides,
- 5 act silly or show off,
- 6 interrupt other students,
- 7 talk about other students' conflicts.

### **A CONFIDENT PERSON**

- 1. TRUSTS HIM AND/OR HER SELF**
- 2. KNOWS WHAT THEY ARE DOING**

### **TO LOOK AND FEEL CONFIDENT, REMEMBER TO:**

- 1. Sit and stand straight, but not stiff.**
- 2. Breathe regularly.**
- 3. Maintain regular eye contact.**
- 4. Place your hands at your sides or on your thighs.**
- 5. Speak moderately, not too quickly or slowly.**
- 6. Take turns talking—don't interrupt.**
- 7. Think to yourself, "I can do this."**

### **AS AN ACTIVE LISTENER, YOU WILL TRY TO UNDERSTAND OTHER PEOPLE BY:**

**USING YOUR ENTIRE BODY**

**YOUR EYES, MIND, and HEART**

### **HOW TO ACTIVELY LISTEN**

- 1. Sit so you can see everyone.**
- 2. Maintain open and friendly posture.**
- 3. Maintain eye contact.**
- 4. Make listening sounds.**
- 5. Encourage the speaker to say more.**
- 6. Ask questions to get more information.**
- 7. Restate in your own words, what the speaker said.**
- 8. Listen with your eyes, mind, and heart.**

**CONFLICT** is a natural and normal part of living.

**CONFLICT** can be dealt with in positive or negative ways.

It's **HOW WE CHOOSE TO DEAL WITH CONFLICT** that's Good or Bad!

We can **CHOOSE** to React to Conflict in one of three ways.

<b>AVOID</b>	React by <b>DODGING</b> the problem, by ignoring it.
<b>CONFRONT</b>	React by <b>BULLYING</b> people with verbal and/or physical attacks.
<b>COMMUNICATE</b>	React by cooperating and <b>COMING TOGETHER TO TALK</b> and to work together.

**CONFLICT MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS  
WORK BEST IF  
EVERYONE BELIEVES THAT:**

1. Conflict is a natural and normal part of living.
2. Conflict can be dealt with in positive ways.
3. Students are responsible and can solve their own problems.
4. Students can find peaceful solutions to their problems.

## GUIDELINES

**T**ake turns talking.

**E**nd name calling and put downs.

**A**gree to work on solving the problem.

**M**aintain honesty.

**S**tay seated

### THE 4 TRAITS OF A GOOD RESOLUTION

If a resolution is good,

1. it is BALANCED. This means that both disputants share the responsibility for making it work.
2. it SOLVES THE PROBLEM FOR GOOD.
3. the DISPUTANTS CAN DO WHAT THEY PROMISE.
4. it is DETAILED.

### A DETAILED RESOLUTION TELLS THE FOLLOWING ABOUT EACH DISPUTANT:

WHAT each is going to do to solve the problem.

WHEN each is going to do what he or she promised.

WHERE each is going to do what he or she promised.

**CONFLICT MANAGER TEST**

1. From the list of actions below, underline ALL THE ACTIONS which describe a Conflict Manager who is behaving professionally:

- a. Advice-giver.
- b. Looking and speaking confidently and friendly.
- c. Acting silly to help the disputants forget their problem.
- d. Keeping confidential what the disputants say.

2. Fill in the guidelines which are missing:

T

E

A

Maintain

S

3. **STAGE I** of the “**Conflict Management Process**” involves introducing yourself to the disputants, asking them their names, and getting an agreement to the “5 Guidelines.”

What happens in **STAGE II** of the “**Conflict Management Process**?”



## CONFLICT MANAGER TEST - Page 2

4. List two things (QUALITIES) which make a good resolution.

a.

b.

**TRUE OR FALSE** Put a "T" by the statements which are True and an "F" by the statements which are False.

5. \_\_\_\_\_ Conflict managers take sides with the disputants.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ After hearing what happened, the Conflict Manager should decide who is right and who is wrong.
7. \_\_\_\_\_ One goal of the conflict manager is to work with the disputants so they can think of the best way to keep the problem from happening again.
8. \_\_\_\_\_ As soon as the disputants break some of the guidelines, the Managers should quit helping them and leave them alone.
9. \_\_\_\_\_ A good Manager gives advice to disputants.

For a conflict management program to be successful, it helps if everyone believes that

10. \_\_\_\_\_ students can peacefully find solutions to their problems.
11. \_\_\_\_\_ conflict is bad.
12. \_\_\_\_\_ students are irresponsible and they need someone superior to tell them what to do.

**CONFLICT MANAGERS ORAL TEST**  
(with answers)

*(8 pts.)*

1. If you're on duty on the playground and you see a dispute, describe what you would do. (Describe what you do in Part I of the 12 Steps to Solving a Conflict.)

- Go up and introduce yourself.
- Ask them their names.
- Ask, "Do you want to solve your problem?"
- Get them to move to a different area and agree to the 4 rules.
- Take turns talking.
- End put downs and name calling.
- Agree to solve the problem.
- Maintain honesty.

*(4 pts.)*

2. If you're on duty on the playground and you ask two disputants if they want help and they tell you to go away,

What are some things you would say?

"Well, if it keeps happening, maybe a teacher or principal will ..."

"Well, if you decide you want to, we'll be over here and you can come and get us."

How would you behave?

"Calm and friendly."

*(2 pts.)*

3. What should you say when a disputant refuses to state the problem or won't answer you?

"I can't help you if you won't tell us what the problem is as you see it."

"I get the impression that you don't want to solve the problem."

Then, remind the disputant that he/she is breaking that rule.

*(2 pts.)*

4. State two things which make a good resolution.

- It is detailed and tells when, where, and what the disputants have agreed to do.
- Both the disputants share responsibility for making it work. (It is balanced.)
- It will solve the problem.

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(12 pts.)

5. **Role-Play Conflict Resolution.** Bring in 2 disputants and describe a conflict they are to resolve with the assistance of the Manager.

Suggested scenarios are listed below.

It's okay for the Manager to listen to your description. Instruct the disputants and Manager to assume that they have agreed to the 5 guidelines. Tell the Manager to start with Stage II.

(4 pts.)

STAGE II - Describing What Happened.

(see 12 Steps in the Student Manual.)

(4 pts.)

STAGE III - Creating Solutions and Choosing the Best.

(4 pts.)

STAGE IV - Reviewing the Resolution and Ending the Session

**Scenarios:**

1. There is a water fountain on the playground. One student cut in front of another. They pushed and shoved each other. One called the other mean names.
2. Two friends found a \$5 bill on the playground. They started arguing about who saw it first and who gets the money.
3. Two friends argued because one of them wanted to invite a new student in class to play with them, and the other didn't. The one that didn't want to, told the other that if she/he played with the new student, they wouldn't be friends any more.
4. Two friends got off the school bus and started arguing. They were throwing food from their lunch boxes at the bus driver. Only one of them was caught and was reported to the principal. This student is mad because she/he thinks the other student should get in trouble, too.
5. One student was playing with a ball, and another student came and took the ball away.

APPENDIX C  
MEDIATOR TRAINING SCHEDULE

ELEMENTARY STUDENT - CONFLICT MANAGEMENT TRAINING

TRAINERS' HANDBOOK: DON'T FIGHT & DON'T GIVE IN!

CHAPTER GUIDE TO STUDENTS' MANUAL

(Prepared by: Karen C. Evans, Ph.D. 4/95)

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**SESSION in TRAINERS'  
HANDBOOK**

**CHAPTERS referred to in  
STUDENTS' MANUAL**

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**SESSION**

1 - Welcome & Introduction

1

1 - CM Practice Effective Communi-  
cation Skills,

+++++

**SESSION**

1 - Welcome & Introduction (Review)

2

2 - How Mediation Works (Review)

2 - How You Deal with Conflict: The  
Choice is Yours, p. 16

+++++

**SESSION**

2 - How you Deal with Conflict  
(Review)

3

2 - How Conflict Management Works

3 - The Conflict Manager as a  
Professional: Qualities & Role

4 - Preparing for Mediation

6 - Stage 1: Opening the Session &  
Setting the Guidelines  
(Overview & Practice)

+++++

(CONTINUED)

SESSION 4

5 - Overview of the Peer Mediation "Process"

6 - Stage 1: Opening the Session & Handling Broken Rules

+++++

SESSION 5

7 - Stage 2: Describing What Happened

(Developing Active Listening Skills)

+++++

SESSION 6

7 - Stage 2: Describing What Happened (Review and Practice)

8 - Stage 3: Creating Solutions & Choosing the Best

+++++

SESSION 7

Practice Stage 3: Creative Solutions

8 - Responsibilities of C.M.

9 - Introduction Stage 4: Review the Resolution & Closing

+++++

SESSION 8

9 - Review "Good Resolution"

9 - Review Resolution & Closing

+++++

SESSION 9

10 - How to Handle Difficult Situations

+++++

SESSION 10

10 - How to Handle Difficult Situations

Written Test & Role Plays by Groups

APPENDIX D  
STAFF MEDIATION TRAINING SURVEY

## EVALUATION OF PEER MEDIATION TRAINING SURVEY

CIRCLE THE NUMBER THAT BEST EXPLAINS HOW YOU FEEL.

1 str. agree 2 agree 3 undecided 4 disagree 5 str. disagree 6 NA

- |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. The presenter was well prepared.   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 2. The presenter was enthusiastic.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 3. The presentation kept my interest.   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 4. I have a better understanding of the mediation process.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 5. Peer mediation is applicable for middle school students.   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 6. Conflict management and mediation skills should be made part of the curriculum.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 7. These skills would be beneficial for inside and outside the school setting.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 8. I think peer mediation would reduce my time spent on discipline.   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 9. I would like to take part in any further planning and implementation of a peer mediation program at the middle school. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:



APPENDIX E  
MEDIATOR NOMINATION FORM

# PICKERINGTON MIDDLE SCHOOL

# PEER MEDIATOR

## NOMINATION FORM

Dear Student,

The success of our Peer Mediation Program next year will depend heavily upon selecting good mediators from your class. Please help us by nominating other classmates that you believe possess the following special characteristics:

- they are good listeners
- they have good verbal skills
- they show initiative
- they are someone you trust
- they are someone you respect
- they can keep a confidence

Remember, these students will be there to help you, so you need to think about your nominations very carefully! Also, please keep your nominations private, and do not discuss them with anyone else. Thanks!!!

*I nominate the following students from my class to serve as Peer Mediators: (no more than three nominations permitted)*

**1. Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Reasons:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**2. Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Reasons:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**3. Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Reasons:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### SUMMARY

The purpose of this practicum was designed to study and define the merits of peer mediation with fifth and sixth grade students. The study included the examination of student and staff benefits from the use of peer mediation as opposed to other discipline alternatives. It also included the development of a design for a peer mediation program at the middle school level. It examined the selection and training of student mediators as well as the role of the staff. The evaluation of the study was qualitative and quantitative in nature and included formal and informal assessment and evaluation procedures. Conclusions were drawn through analytical interpretation of journal entries, questionnaires, teacher and student evaluations, interviews, anecdotal records, and teacher observations. The research was conducted at Pickerington Middle School, a fifth and sixth grade building, in central Ohio. The population of nearly 1,000 fifth and sixth grade students, teachers and 30 support staff were participants in the handbook study.

During the time frame of the study, a peer mediation program was

designed for a fifth and sixth grade middle school, to be implemented during the following school year. Research and planning was initiated in September and continued through May with additional training sessions scheduled for the summer. Using conclusions drawn from current research, visitations, demonstrations and observations, a special program was designed for the middle school. To facilitate in completion of this design, a professional mediation consultant was contracted. This consultant, along with staff members, developed selection and training procedures.

A pilot program was implemented with the purpose of gaining further data to be used in finalizing a peer mediation program for the whole school. Students in the pilot classrooms were introduced to conflict resolution and peer mediation skills. The materials used to introduce these skills included journal prompts, role-plays, discussions and teacher guided simulations.

The study produced several outcomes. The major outcome of the study indicated that students and staff benefited from peer mediation and conflict resolution. Students were able to identify alternative methods of resolving conflicts in a non-threatening manner. Students showed improvement in listening, communication and problem solving skills. The

safe and positive atmosphere of the classroom was a result of the student accepting responsibility for resolving conflicts. Another outcome of the study was the ability of the teachers in the pilot classroom to devote more classroom time to teaching and instructing rather than discipline.

Another surprising outcome was the overwhelming enthusiasm expressed by students, staff, and parents in response to the program. Due to insufficient time to train students and implement the program school-wide, these outcomes were based on research, observations, and the pilot program. Upon implementation of the school-wide program, during the following school year, even greater outcomes were expected.

### Conclusions and Implications

The conclusions drawn from the handbook study on peer mediation as a method of conflict resolution were positive. The project concluded that mediation and conflict resolution skills were beneficial to the students. The project further concluded that students are capable of analyzing alternative ways for reducing anger, resolving conflicts, and choosing appropriate and positive solutions to problems.

Other project findings concluded that teachers experienced more uninterrupted instructional time in a more positive environment. Teachers used the process to build instructional lessons compatible with

the needs of the students. Teachers found that the listening, communication, and problem solving skills learned throughout the project were valuable to students in other academic areas. Teachers observed a reduction in the number of conflicts within their classroom.

The study concluded that parents benefited from the mediation process as well. Parents perceived their children as being more capable of resolving conflicts on their own. They further observed positive benefits from the use of conflict resolution skills their children acquired during the project. Through analysis of research, it was concluded that these skills not only had a positive influence at school and home, but in the community as well.

The handbook project concluded that a high level of enthusiasm existed for the opportunity to resolve conflicts in a more successful way. This enthusiasm was exhibited by students, staff, and parents and was evidenced by their involvement during the development of the program.

Although the findings were positive, additional data would be collected upon implementation of the program school wide. After more participants are involved over a longer period of time, more substantial results will be obtained in order to draw major conclusions about a school wide program.

Similarly, positive or negative reactions to student training materials, student-body to student-mediator relationships, and curriculum materials will require investigation when the program is implemented in the fall.

### Recommendations

The practicum would be worthy of replication. While the project demonstrated the benefits of peer mediation as a method of conflict resolution, there are recommendations offered to those electing to use the handbook as a model.

**Recommendation 1:** Develop a team or committee to design the peer mediation program. It is important to involve administrators, teachers, support staff, and parents in the development of the program. Sharing the responsibility would aid in understanding and communication of program goals and procedures. This would insure successful implementation of the program.

**Recommendation 2:** Contract with a professional mediation consultant to aid in the design of a peer mediation program. The expertise of a professional assists in the development and selection of materials, the training of students and staff, and the consideration of unforeseen factors in finalizing a program suitable to the needs of your school.

Recommendation 3: Before instituting the program school wide, implement conflict resolution and mediation on a small scale, such as in a small number of pilot classrooms. This facilitates finalization of a program design and procedures that will best benefit a specific school and its needs.

Recommendation 4: Include conflict resolution skills in the curriculum for the entire student body. Using the listening, communication and problem-solving skills learned in the curriculum will benefit students in academic areas as well as aid in making the peer mediation process more successful.

Recommendation 5: Develop methods to continually evaluate and re-evaluate all aspects of the program. Include surveys, questionnaires, and periodic meetings to discuss the program. Students, staff, and parents should be involved in this evaluation process. Thus, the program will continue to meet the specific needs of the school, even as these needs may change.



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